



Annexing County Pockets

Posted by [Pierluigi Oliverio](#) on Monday, November 01, 2010

During the past few years, the City of San Jose has annexed 42 county pockets. These annexations came about in two ways. First, the State of California changed the law that made county pockets that are under 150 acres unable to vote on whether not they wanted to be annexed. Second, the County of Santa Clara had wanted San Jose to annex county pockets for years. San Jose avoided the topic until there was a court settlement with the County where the City agreed to annex a portfolio of county pockets from west to east based on the "sphere of influence"—lines that have been drawn for decades that indicate which cities county pockets would be annexed into.

By default, county pockets are different depending on their location and needs. Some county pockets have a high crime rate and gang activity while other pockets have an extremely low crime rate and no gang activity. Some county pockets do not have storm sewers, streetlights or sidewalks while others do have such infrastructure. The more affluent county pockets have higher real estate values and therefore bring in more property tax revenue to cover services while less affluent county pockets have lower property values and thus lower property tax revenues.

Last week, the city voted to annex the last under-150-acre county pocket in District 9 that is surrounded by San Jose on three sides, a combination of commercial and residential which is just down the street from the Camden Community Center. The commercial properties are along Camden Avenue and Bascom Avenue while the residential is tucked away in a neighborhood of single family homes in the \$800K range. The majority of residents of this particular county pocket wanted to be annexed by Campbell instead of San Jose. They spoke at the council meeting to how they identified with Campbell and not San Jose since they liked a small-town feel and Downtown Campbell was closer then Downtown San Jose.

There was also a concern about response time for fire, so after further study it was concluded that County Fire, based on geographic location,

would continue to better serve the residents. Therefore the current fee for the fire district on the homeowner's property tax bill would continue to go to county fire so the service would not change. Due to the higher property value of the homes and the commercial land this annexation resulted in positive revenue for The City of over \$230,000 per year. While prior annexations will cost the city money due to less revenues from property tax this one was positive. So going against all the speakers at the meeting the council voted to annex the pocket.

On a personal note, it was tough a tough vote for me since my childhood friend was the neighborhood association president for this county pocket and did not want San Jose annexation. It's important for me to separate what is best for the city as a whole. If at any time I was told I could pick and choose which county pockets to annex, then I may have voted no on the pockets that were going to cost our city money.

I think if we were doing it all over again it would have been wise to annex the higher property value pockets first so we could bring in the revenue to pay for city services. Sometime in the future, and it is not known when, the City may annex the very large county pockets such as Burbank in District 6, Cambrian Plaza in District 9, two in District 7 and the massive county pockets in District 5 which would make up about a third of the entire district.

Here is the presentation on annexation that was given to the city council by the planning department.

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